

REMARKS

The last Office Action of October 31, 2000 has been carefully considered. Reconsideration of the instant application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 to 25 are pending in the application

Claims 1, 4-10 and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Sudau of record.

Claim 11 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sudau.

It is noted with appreciation that claim 25 is allowed. It is also noted that claims 2, 3 12-16, 18-24 are indicated allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims under 35 U.S.C. §112.

In view of the Examiner's grounds for rejection, applicant has rewritten claim 2 in independent form by incorporating the feature of claim 1. Claim 1 has been canceled. Claims 3 to 24 depend directly or indirectly on claim 2. With respect to claim 9, applicant wishes to clarify an ambiguity caused by the amendment submitted on January 12, 1999, because as clearly shown, e.g., in Fig. 2, and also set forth in the original version of claim 9, the clam area (40) is provided between the first and second guide surface, whereas the gap (31) is situated between the first guide surface (30) and the second module (29). The

amendment of claim 9, as submitted herewith, essentially returns the subject matter of claim 9 to the original version thereof.

In addition, applicant submits herewith new independent claims 26, 47, 68, 88, 106, 123, 141, with independent claim 26 combining the subject matter of claims 1, 11 and 12, with independent claim 47 combining the subject matter of claims 1 and 13, with independent claim 68 combining the subject matter of claims 1 and 15, with independent claim 88 combining the subject matter of claims 1, 17 and 18, with independent claim 106 combining the subject matter of claims 1 and 22, with independent claim 123 combining the subject matter of claims 1 and 23, and with independent claim 141 combining the subject matter of claims 1, 9 and 10.

Dependent claims 27 to 46 are made dependent on independent claim 26 and set forth subject matter recited in claims 3 to 10, 13 to 24. Dependent claims 48 to 67 are made dependent on independent claim 47 and set forth subject matter recited in claims 3 to 11, 14 to 24. Dependent claims 69 to 87 are made dependent on independent claim 68 and set forth subject matter recited in claims 3 to 11, 14, 16 to 24. Dependent claims 89 to 105 are made dependent on independent claim 88 and set forth subject matter recited in claims 3 to 11, 14, 16, 19 to 24. Dependent claims 107 to 122 are made dependent on independent claim 106 and set forth subject matter recited in claims 3 to 11, 14, 16, 17, 19 to 21 and 24. ~~Dependent claims 124 to 140 are made dependent on independent~~
~~claim 123 and set forth subject matter recited in claims 3 to 11, 14, 16, 17, 19 to~~
~~22, 24.~~

A check in the amount of \$1,401.00 for submitting 6 independent claims in excess of three and submitting 129 additional claims in excess of twenty is enclosed.

With respect to claim 141, applicant notes that claim 141 is a combination of claims 1, 9 and 10. An essential feature of this claim is the subject matter of claim 10, setting forth that *the calm area (40) has an opening* [reference number 6] *extending radially outward that leads to the spring chamber.* (compare also page 13, lines 15 to 17). As noted above, the calm area according to the present invention is not located between the first guide surface and the second module, as stated by the Examiner on page 3 of the Office Action, but between the first and second guide surfaces (30, 50). Sudau fails to disclose an opening that connects the calm area to the spring chamber. The Examiner has designated on page 2 in the Office Action the "opening" and the "calm area" in the reproductions of Figs. 1 and 2 of Sudau. An examination of the Examiner's interpretation clearly shows, that the opening does not communicate with the spring chamber. Rather, as shown in Fig. 1, the opening leads to the outside. Therefore, it is believed that Sudau neither teaches nor suggests the subject matter of claim 141.

As for the dependent claims 142 to 155, setting forth subject matter recited in claims 3 to 8, 11, 14, 16, 17, 19 to 21, 24, these claims depend on claim 141, share its presumably allowable features, and therefore it is respectfully submitted that these claims should also be allowed.

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate conditions for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the outstanding rejection of the claims and to pass this application to issue.

Should the Examiner consider necessary or desirable any formal changes anywhere in the specification, claims and/or drawing, then it is respectfully requested that such changes be made by Examiner's Amendment, if the Examiner feels this would facilitate passage of the case to issuance. If the Examiner feels that it might be helpful in advancing this case by calling the undersigned, applicant would greatly appreciate such a telephone interview.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 06-0502.

Respectfully submitted,

By: 

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